THROUGH LIFE'S SHADOWS.

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"Found themselves in a large, square pew."

CHAPTER X.

"FEAR NOT."

THERE was great excitement in the village of L—— the following Sunday, for it was known that the new occupants of the "Folly" would make their appearance in church, and long before the hour for divine service the churchyard was crowded. Old men with their clean smocked blouses, dames with their black silk poke bonnets, young men and maidens in their Sunday best, lingered about outside to see the "quality" make their entrance into the village church.

A low basket carriage drew up at the wicket gate, and a young girl in white jumped out, followed by a boy who looked delicate, but bright and intelligent.

They both smiled as they saw the curiosity their presence excited, and the boy shrank back, but his sister whispered, "Come, don't be nervous," and slipping her arm into his, the two passed up the churchyard between the rows of villagers, under the old Norman porch into the church; at the entrance they were met by the sexton, who, touching his forehead, said in an audible whisper:

"If your honours will step this way!" and the two young things, awed by their own unexpected importance, felt intensely relieved when they found themselves in a large,

square pew, the high wooden partitions of which effectually hid them from view.

"Oh, Daisy, however shall we get out of this?" whispered the boy. "I wish father had come."

"All right," answered the girl hastily, for the clergyman was in the reading desk and the service begun.

"They be the prettiest couple I ever set eyes upon," said old Mrs. Lister that afternoon to Ruth, who seldom went to morning service, remaining to take charge of the house, and thus allow of Miss Lister's accompanying the old lady.

In the evening she and Ann went together to evening service, and this was the happiest hour in the week for both of them, followed by the walk home. This special Sunday morning had been very trying for Ruth.

Maria had had a bad night, and refused all food, Theresa was high and mighty; she who had formerly scoffed at Maria's imaginary ailments, now treated her like a martyr, humouring her in every way, and acting in such a manner as to make Ruth feel as if she were the cause of all their sufferings. It was a strange, uneventful life for so young a girl, and yet such a busy one, that Ruth had no time to feel the monotony of it; her work was really and truly a case of "daily bread," with the constant fear lest it should not suffice. Sunday was just her breathing time, the afternoon of which she generally spent with the Listers.

Religion had never been to Ruth what it was now. As she sat opposite the old lady, with the big Bible on her knees, reading to her, she realised for the first time the comfort and beauty of that sacred volume.

She learnt patience and faith, aye, and her hope was sustained—"Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid," "Fear not, O ye of little faith." How often do such like words of comfort and encouragement meet the reader's eyes, and penetrate the heart and soul of those who feel themselves alone in the world; their loved ones far away, or gone before them to that other land, leaving them comfortless to bear the burden and heat of the day.

In their desolation they remember that Friend that sticketh closer than a brother, and like Peter, when he felt the waves rising around, and the storm gathering overhead, they stretch out feeble hands, and the cry goes forth, "Lord save me, or I perish." "Fear not, fear not," is the gentle answer, and peace and strength are vouchsafed; not stilling the pain, hardly lightening the burden, perhaps, but just giving power to endure. And the world marvels how the trouble is so lightly borne, the sorrow laid so easily upon one side, how the lips are made to smile, though the heart be fit to break. "My strength is sufficient for thee," and the path is opened out, and knowledge and patience come to the very weakest; and so it was even with Ruth, she could not see a step before her; by the labour of her hands she sufficed for their daily wants, there was nothing to spare; if sickness should come upon her there was no provision for the morrow either for her or for the others. No news had reached her of Clement. Was he seeking her or had he given her up? Perhaps daily and hourly association with another girl rich and beautiful, had charmed his senses and made him so forgetful of her, that he had found it comparatively easy to bend his will to his father's! Such were the thoughts that assailed Ruth on dark days, when her body was weary, and her flesh weak; but she did her best to throw them on one side and retain her faith alike in God and in her love. She was much amused this especial Sunday at Mrs. Lister's excitement in speaking of the new comers.

"She's just like what one pictures a guardian angel," said the old lady, "walking beside the boy in her white frock and her golden hair, with such blue eyes smiling so sweetly. The boy is not nearly so fair, and seems very delicate. You will think me fanciful, but do you know Miss Ruth, it struck me he was like you, he has the same serious face, whereas his sister is brimming over with fun, a perfect sunbeam."

"Do you know their name?" asked Ruth.

"No," said Miss Lister; "I did not catch it, but we shall not be long before we hear it, I never knew such a fuss made about people before, everybody is talking about them."

At that moment a clap of thunder startled them all.

"A storm," said Ruth, going to the window, "and a heavy one I am afraid, the sky is black; I hope it will clear up, that we may go to church this evening!"

"Oh, yes, it is only just four, there is plenty of time," said Ann; "I thought the atmosphere was very heavy—ah, there it comes again!" A flash of lightning lit up the room, followed by a rolling peal of thunder.

"I'll move your chair away from the window, if you'll let me, Mrs. Lister," said Ruth.

"Thank you, my dear," answered the old lady, rising; "I'm not nervous, but the lightning is powerful. Here comes the rain!" As she spoke the first big drops came pattering against the window panes, and in a few seconds the rain was pouring down in sheets, as if the clouds had burst asunder.

"I think I'd better go and see after Maria," said Ruth, rising; "a storm always makes her feel badly." As she spoke they were all startled by a loud rapping at the front door. "Some one caught in the storm; I'll go and see who it is," she added, leaving the room quickly.

Opening the front door she was startled at seeing a young girl, all in white, standing in the porch, her dress and hat drenched, and her arms clasped tightly round a slim, delicate lad, who pressed close up to her for shelter.

"Oh, please," she began, but Ruth interrupted her.

"Come in, pray, come in, you are wet through."

"Half drowned," was the answer. "Now, Cyril," and pushing her brother before her she entered.

"You had better step this way, into the kitchen, if you do not mind, there is a fire there," said Ruth.

"Thank you, that will be much better," and she followed Ruth, who pulled two chairs forward in front of the kitchen fire, which she began poking up, for on Sunday afternoons it was allowed to get low. Whilst she was thus occupied Miss Lister came in.

"That's no use at all, Ruth," she said; "they must get these wet clothes off; if you'll take the young lady up to your room, I'll manage for this young man."

"It does not matter in the least about me, but Cyril, what will the doctor and father say? Our first outing, too!"

"Come this way, my dear," and Miss Lister opened the door, and taking Cyril by the arm led him up stairs to the room she shared with her mother. "You had better leave him to me, and let Miss Cox attend to you," said Miss Lister, as the girl followed her brother.

"Oh, no, I must see to Cyril first," she answered, and her face was white with anxiety.

"Very well. Here is a blanket, my boy; take your clothes off, wrap yourself in it, and get into bed, and I'll bring you some hot drink."

Cyril attempted to obey, but would have utterly failed

but for his sister's help; he was shivering from head to feet, his teeth chattering. Ten minutes later, however, he was lying in bed drinking a bowl of hot milk, and declaring he felt all right.

"Now, Daisy, go and see after yourself," he said.

"You must, really," said Ruth; "come up into my room and put on a dressing gown, while your dress is being dried."

"Thank you! I think I may venture to leave you now, Cyril."

"Of course you may; be quick and change, Daisy, or we shall be having you ill next."

"That would be a novelty," she answered smiling; and turning to Ruth she added, "If you will be so kind, I shall be grateful." And in her own room, as she handed her a white cashmere wrapper, Ruth looked at her new acquaintance—indeed, they caught each other in the act and simultaneously smiled. "I think it's time I introduced myself, and thanked you for your kindness," said the stranger. "I am Margaret Ruthven, commonly called Daisy; we are living at the 'Folly,' as I daresay you know. We came out together, my brother Cyril and I, for a stroll this afternoon; it is not often Cyril is able to take a walk, but he felt so particularly well; it is very provoking having had this mishap. If only he does not take cold!"

Ruth had listened almost without hearing. She had caught the name Margaret Ruthven and the thought had rushed through her mind, "Can they be Clement's Ruthvens, and if so where is he?" The colour flushed up into her cheeks, and then left her quite pale, but mastering her emotion she said, "I hope you will like the 'Folly;' do you know this part of the country?"

"Except a short stay in London, we have never lived in England. I was born in Australia, and we came to Europe a little over a year ago to consult for my brother, and have been travelling ever since. We shall stay at the 'Folly' till the autumn, and then either go to Italy or to Egypt again."

There was no mistake, they were the Ruthvens with whom Clement had gone abroad, and he might be near, quite near to her. Her heart beat almost to suffocation.

Daisy noticed the change in her expression, and was about to remark upon it, when the door opened, and Miss Lister came in, saying, "A carriage has come for you from the 'Folly,' Miss Ruthven. Some one saw you take shelter here, and went down and gave notice. They have brought wraps. Do you think it will be prudent to move your brother at once?"

"Yes," answered Daisy, "I must get him home immediately, or my father will be wild with anxiety. Who has come?"

"Two men-servants," answered Miss Lister.

"I will speak to them," said Daisy, and she followed Miss Lister out of the room.

A few minutes later Cyril was carried down and put into the carriage.

"I cannot thank you enough," said Daisy to Ruth and Miss Lister, as, with a large cloak thrown over her white wrapper, she prepared to follow. "I hope you will let me come and see you again?"

"You will do us much honour," said Miss Lister, highly flattered, and not a little proud that the neighbours should see the carriage and footmen at the gate of the Hermitage.

"And you will come and see me at the Folly," continued Daisy, holding out her hand to Ruth.

"I have no time; I never go out," she answered quickly, moving away.

Daisy looked after her, surprised at the sudden abruptness. "Strange girl," she thought, "but I like her," and once more smiling cordially to Miss Lister, she got into the carriage and was driven away, little thinking she had left an aching heart behind her; and Ruth turned slowly back into the house, and climbing the narrow attic stairs leading to her own room, she entered, and throwing herself on her knees beside the little iron bedstead, she wept bitterly. For the first time her faith was shaken. Clement was living under the same roof with this girl, so young and fair and rich—surely he had forgotten her.

CHAPTER XI.

"DAILY BREAD."

So little interest did Maria and Theresa apparently feel in what went on around them, that beyond the fact that some one had taken refuge from the storm in the house, they asked no questions. Ruth knew that it was even doubtful whether they were aware that Ruthven was the name of the people with whom Clement had gone abroad. However, in case they might be, she just casually asked Miss Lister not to mention it.

"We knew people of that name once," she said, "and it would annoy my sisters to renew any acquaintance of olden times under present circumstances."

As for herself, she kept closer than ever to her work, and made it an excuse for not receiving Miss Ruthven when she called a few days later. But that young lady was not accustomed to contradiction. Ruth had caught her fancy, she could not have said why or wherefore, but she felt drawn towards her, so when Miss Lister excused Ruth's non-appearance, she pouted slightly, like a spoilt child, and then said, coaxingly—

"Do you think she will mind if I go up to her, as she is so very busy?"

"I really cannot say," answered Miss Lister. "The Misses Cox are very proud and keep to themselves, and though Miss Ruth is the least so, still she may have her reasons for not wishing to be intruded upon."

"Did you say her name was Ruth?" asked Daisy.

"Yes, I did," said Miss Lister.

A thoughtful look crept over Daisy's face. "She is your niece, is she not?" she asked.

"My niece! Whatever put that idea in your head? She is a London young lady, living with her two sisters. They have known better days, but have lost all their money, and that dear child upstairs works like a galley-slave to keep them all."

A moment's silence, then Daisy said, "If you will allow me, I will go upstairs."

"As you think proper," was the rather short answer, unheeding which Daisy left the room, and climbing the narrow attic stairs, knocked at Ruth's door.

"Come in," said Ruth, thinking it was Miss Lister, and without looking up from her work. When she heard the door open and a step crossing the floor, she added, "Then she's gone?"

A low laugh and a quiet "If you mean me, I'm afraid I'm not gone."

Up started Ruth. "Miss Ruthven!"

"I heard you were painting, and—well, my brother is so passionately fond of painting I ventured to intrude."

Ruth stood like an icicle. "I am sorry you should have taken the trouble to come upstairs. I do nothing worth looking at."

"And those lovely white lilies, and that trailing branch of clematis; do you call them not worth looking at?" and,

without waiting for an invitation, she seated herself at Ruth's work-table, saying, "Do go on; I can talk to you whilst you work."

"But I cannot work whilst you talk," said Ruth, "and," she hesitated, "these panels have to go to London by the coach to-morrow morning, I must take them down to the Castle this evening."

"I understand," said Daisy, rising, "I will come back to-morrow."

"To-morrow, next day, and the day after, are all alike to me; I cannot idle my time away like other girls." There was a certain impatience in Ruth's manner, a note of pain in her voice, which struck Daisy's sensitive ear, and went straight to her heart.

"It hardly seems fair that my life should be so easy and yours so hard," she said caressingly, "but never mind, all that may change yet; as you do not want me I will go now. Won't you kiss me and be friends?"

The tears sprang to Ruth's eyes. Ah, how could Clement live with this girl and fail to love her? Kiss her and be friends? That was hard lines, when a jealous fear was making her heart ache; she could have cried out in her pain: "You have all things; wealth and home, surely you might have left me my love!" But she crushed the pain back, just touched Daisy's forehead with her lips, saying, "Indeed, I think you must have friends enough; I go nowhere and know no one; our paths lie too far apart to allow of friendship between us."

"We shall see if that is so," said Daisy, smiling, as she left the room.

"It will be better, for him, much better," said Ruth to herself, taking up her brush and resuming her occupation. "I could not bear to see him over-weighted, held back in his career, all for my sake! What would become of Maria and Theresa if I left them? It is impossible! No, no! my duty is quite clear; I must walk in the shadow, and she, Daisy Ruthven, in the sunshine, at least as far as this world is concerned." Her eyes were so dim with tears that she was obliged to pause in her work to wipe them away. Self-abnegation is a very fine thing in the abstract, but hard, very hard, when we are called upon to exercise it in our daily life; then only do the pain and weariness make themselves truly felt, and human nature revolts against the outrage. Love and religion alone raise the soul so high above the earth and earthly things as to transform pain and suffering into quiet satisfaction and inward peace—"Love Divine all love excelling." Ah, truly, when the spirit of right guides and tempers earthly love, then the weak are indeed made strong, capable of self-sacrifice, even of martyrdom. Ruth loved Clement, even more now if that were possible than when he bade her farewell; but she had learnt the lesson, which sooner or later comes to all true Christian hearts, that we cannot live for ourselves alone, that our future is in God's hand, and that we must bend to His will, not struggle against it. "He cannot fail to be happy with her, she is so sweet," thought Ruth, as, notwithstanding her resolution, the brush fell from her hand, and her mind wandered from her work. "I have passed out of his life, why should I intrude into it again? He is not likely to find me here," and so in her own mind the matter was settled. "I have not given him up, I shall never know another love, but our paths must from henceforth lie far apart until the end of this life and the dawning of another, then surely we shall clasp hands again," and she resumed her work. But the struggle had left its impression on her face—even Theresa was startled by her ashy whiteness when she came down to tea.

"You'll finish by making yourself ill, always sitting upstairs, and with that smell of turpentine and paint," she said; "you ought to have more consideration, Ruth; what would become of me if I had you ill on my hands, as well as Maria?"

"You need not fear," answered Ruth, her pale lips refusing even to smile, "I am quite well, only tired. I have had to work hard to-day, and have been interrupted; I shall be all right when I have carried my work down to the coach, the air will do me good." She drank her tea, but could not possibly swallow a mouthful of food. "I have still a few stitches to put to my last pieces of crewel work," she said, rising.

Theresa looked at her, and a sudden feeling of compunction came over her; this young thing, the baby of the family, working for them all. "You are not fit to do another stitch," she said hoarsely. "Where is it? I will finish it!"

Ruth could hardly believe her ears. "Oh, Theresa!" she said in a low voice, and, throwing her arms round her sister's neck, she burst into tears.

"There, there," said Theresa, her own tears falling, "what an obstinate child it is. I had hoped to tire you out, but not kill you; go and get me the work, or, rather, lie down, and tell me where it is," and loosening Ruth's arms she listened to her directions, and leaving the room returned with the work, sat down and finished it.

"Thank you, oh, thank you," said Ruth, kissing her, when she took the parcel from her hand to carry it with the other things down to the coach.

"It's lady-like work and no one need know it," said Theresa; "I have no objection to helping you in future, as it seems to be our only opportunity," and turning away she left the room.

So, though she did not recognise it even to herself, love and patience had conquered, and notwithstanding her secret sorrow, it was with almost a light heart that Ruth went down the village street; from henceforth the whole burden would not rest upon her shoulders, she knew full well that what Theresa said she would do she would most certainly perform. The young require so little to make life bearable, there is such a natural spring within them, and they have hope, sweet hope ever before their eyes and in their hearts. So although her head was aching Ruth was still able to please the landlady of the "Castle," by sitting down in the parlour and chatting with her for a quarter of an hour. The good woman would have been greatly hurt in her feelings if she had failed doing so, for she looked upon Ruth almost as a protége of her own, and considered she had been the means of her settling in L———. When at last she had taken leave, the evening was so balmy that she determined to go home across the beautiful park which surrounded the castle. As she entered the grounds the curfew bell rang out on the still summer air. It was such a lovely evening, such a longing for happiness crept over Ruth, her loneliness weighed upon her spirits as she walked slowly under the great trees, treading down the green grass and the sweet wild flowers, but so lightly that she failed to injure them. Suddenly she stopped short, the sound of footsteps and the low murmur of voices reached her ear, and through the trees she saw the glimmer of a white dress and a girl's figure coming slowly along, and beside her there was one other, the very sight of whom, even from afar, made the blood rush to her heart and brow. Clement! yes she could not be mistaken, it was Clement!

To throw herself behind a large clump of trees was the work of a moment; she could watch them from thence without fear of detection. Slowly they came on, Daisy swinging her hat in her hand and talking eagerly, he more calmly, but though Ruth could not hear the words he uttered, she could see he was speaking earnestly and his companion answered him smiling, looking up into his face so brightly; they evidently understood each other perfectly and were content with each other's society. Just as they passed the clump of trees where Ruth lay hidden, Miss Ruthven laughed lightly, saying, "You are impatient; my word is as good as my bond; give me till the end of the month."

"No longer then, you promise," answered Clement; "I am very tired of this suspense and waiting."

And Daisy shrugged her shoulders, answering, "You men have no patience."

Ruth heard no more; they had passed on. But surely that was enough! One month, one little month and he would have passed away from her for ever, without regret. She had not realised this before, it came upon her suddenly; now she had seen him it seemed so hard to give him up, to be no longer loved, no longer his best, his dearest. And lying in the long, soft grass, Ruth wept almost as bitterly as when we close the eyes of our beloved ones ere they are hidden from our sight. Not quite so hopelessly, though, because the feeling of separation, the great gulf of death did not, as yet, part them; he was living, they were both living, and the very fact of

Jealousy. *(Drawn by Fred Morgan.)*

life forbade despair; the chord of love and hope was not really broken, only strained.

And yet, as she lay there in the long, soft grass, her misery was very real, she could not imagine it could possibly be greater. It seemed to her as if all her youth, all the gladness that belongs to youth, was departing from her.

With their receding footsteps, a great silence fell around, only the twitter of birds going to roost broke the stillness, and Ruth shuddered, the beating of her heart, the strong living love, surging within her, rebelled against this death in life; the shadows of evening hurt her; oh for one hour of sunlight and of joy, the careless gladness of those days when he was beside her. Gone, gone!

Suddenly from amidst the branches of the tree beneath which she lay, there burst forth a song, low at first, but rising clearer and sweeter every second, the nightingale's song; the liquid note, prolonged and soft, breaking upon the silence of coming night, comforted Ruth; she drew a long, long sigh and slowly rose.

For a minute or two she leant against a tree, and her tearful gaze sought instinctively the road Clement and Daisy had taken, but they were already out of sight.

"After all it is better so," she thought, the tears coursing down her face, "it was very selfish of me to wish it otherwise. What could he do with three helpless women to support?" and faintly smiling at the idea she wended her way homewards, crept silently up to her attic and went to bed; but all night long she lay with her eyes wide open, sleepless. It was an awful night to her, and one she never forgot, but the battle was fought and won; she rose next morning and went about her daily work.

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RICH COUSINS.

BY SARAH TYTLER.

FAMILIES, in their members, are like rivers starting from the same source, diverging widely in their courses and ending, the one a strong stream, the other a tiny brook, which has been led into different channels, and drained by mill-dams, till it has dwindled into a quarter the size of its sister-river. So it is with the brothers and sisters belonging to one family. They start with apparently the same advantages—one takes fortune at the full tide, and dies a rich man; another makes an unlucky hit, or a bad investment, cannot retrieve his fortunes, and dies a poor man.

The results inevitably extend to the children. The sons and daughters of sisters who were playfellows, companions, shared everything, were hardly a day apart, till the marriage of one of the two broke the closeness of the bond, may fare very differently. The children of the sister whose husband was, or became in time, a wealthy man, are reared in luxury, are freed both in their own persons, and in those of their parents, from the anxieties of a precarious income and of the necessity of earning their bread. The children of the sister whose husband has lost his means, or has never been rich in this world's goods, who has not "got on," as people say, are called upon to practise some kind of self-denial, whether they will or not, to endure what to the young is often the hardship of being compelled to stand aside, let the world go by them, and relinquish many of the joys which youth craves as its right.

One is glad to think that happiness may be equal though worldly fortunes differ; happiness is not dependent on wealth or poverty, unless the latter be crushing, indeed. On the contrary, there is a zest often lent to life like the sweetness which hunger bestows on the simplest fare, by the struggle of the battle of life, the keenness of the contest, the joy of the victory, which is entirely lacking to the languid man or woman who has no worlds to conquer, who has but to look around and wonder how he or she can best gratify his or her tastes and whims, with least trouble to the hunter after self-indulgence and excitement in some form. As long as youth, with its light heart and eager fancies, casts a glamour over every object and pursuit, there is nothing missed from the feast; but very soon, as pulses beat slower, and satiety induces indifference, passing on swiftly to disgust, the moment of disenchantment comes, and the law stands revealed to us in its stern integrity, "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread." That law must be fulfilled in some shape, if we could keep our hearts young, fresh and joyous to the last. Labour is the obligation of humanity—if we are not required to labour for our own needs, we must labour for the needs of our neighbours, for the elevation, body and soul, of our fellow-creatures, for the extension of God's kingdom on earth. Blessed are the rich, who soonest awake to this ennobling, rejuvenating responsibility—this salvation from the stagnation and deterioration—the moral death, at last, of self-indulgence in a life of small pride, petty vanity, and ingrained worldliness. And blessed are the poor who are the quickest to recognise and accept their portion—nay, to be glad in it as relieving them from many temptations, many perplexities, because they are only bidden to put their shoulder to the wheel, to keep themselves from becoming a burden in some form on the community, to provide for the wants of their household, and rear successors to be as brave and hardy, diligent and cheerful as themselves. The honest, energetic poor who have just enough, or rather less than enough to make both ends meet, are not called upon to wear out their hearts and brains, striving to benefit their race without pauperising and degrading it, while not infrequently the benefactor receives, as the only return for his pains, misconception and ingratitude. So my rich and poor cousins do not stand so far apart in the matter of the highest well-being, the purest happiness, the most lasting contentment, the dauntless spirit which faces obstacles unflinchingly and over-leaps them, the merry heart, which does good like medicine, as a careless superficial observer may suppose.

But what I am principally concerned with at this moment is the delicacy of the relations between the two sets of cousins—the probability that they may, if they do not take care, so act that they in whose veins the same grandparents' blood flows, whose fathers or mothers began by being closest, dearest friends, may grow into positive strangers. There is a still worse possibility that they may develop into natural enemies, on the baser side of human nature. Surely even the lesser evil is to be deeply

deplored and sedulously avoided. What! they who have still physical features in common, the same build, the same complexion, the tricks of gesture and gait derived from the brothers who flew their kites and sailed their toy boats in company, and shared every youthful hope and boyish ambition, or from the sisters who slept in each other's arms, who had not a secret from each other, to be so estranged, so alienated! Is it not something to be regretted, something to be deprecated?

It is said that the feeling of consanguinity lingers longest, and resists most changes in the higher classes, where there is a strong realisation of family obligations, along with the pride of race, a sense of common claims and privileges. This may merely mean that as the characteristic features of a long line of ancestors are preserved in the picture galleries, and much of the life histories of the originals of the pictures may be gathered from the family papers, more is known and retained of the race. This is true, not only of direct progenitors, but of collateral branches from the family-tree, and the familiarity, to a certain extent, with vanished faces and bygone annals gives them a nearness and actuality. These are lacking where people are not aware what their grandfathers were like, where was the birth-place of the one, or what became of the brother of the other who sailed for America, or even went no farther than from the provinces to London in the twenties. It may also mean that the upper classes, who are assured of their position, who have means and leisure, can better afford to acknowledge and to hold out a hand to an uncle or a cousin who has fallen a little out of the ranks, and been worsted in the battle of life.

Therefore, with regard to the tie of cousinship, which may mean a good deal, or well-nigh nothing, I address myself first to the rich cousins. They are in the position to make advances with the best grace.

First, then, let them disabuse themselves of the prejudices which have their root in the sneering estimate of "poor relations," which is never far to seek on the cynical side of literature and of public opinion. I do not say that there is no truth in these strictures, shrewd and witty enough sometimes, but I say that to be over much influenced by them is unfair and ungenerous, often snobbish to the last degree. Quite true, poor relations may often be a bore and a trouble to us. They need never be an affront to us so long as they are honest; poverty is no disgrace, rusticity is quite pardonable, even vulgarity, when it is balanced by redeeming qualities, may be bravely swallowed and forgotten. It is perfectly possible that our poor cousins may annoy us by expecting too much from us, by counting on an unreasonable amount of time and attention to be vouchsafed by us to them and their needs. They may even, without exactly meaning it, take advantage in a mild way of our goodwill, and so to speak abuse it. But what is our goodwill worth if we are not to run a little risk of worry and vexation in its exercise, if we are not to bear and forbear in our relations with our remoter, as with our nearer kin? I have heard of rich folks who shrank from conferring boons on their poorer kindred, in case these should not know how to keep their place, and should plague them by trespassing on their scanty kindness. These rich men and women might have taken their poor young nephews and cousins into the rich men's offices, counting-houses, shops, and consented to their filling such subordinate situations as strange youths filled, thus lending them a start in life. If the lads did well, the heads of the firms might have associated the juniors with themselves and their sons in the businesses which were big enough for both. Or the rich women might have had their poor nieces and cousins, though it were only to occupy the posts of housekeepers or governesses, which the mistresses of the households offered to aspirants whose very names were unknown to them. But, no, the rich men and women would not venture to do so lest they should be hampered by the relationship, lest there should be other rich men and women in the world who would think less of them because their entire connections, to the tenth or twelfth degree, were not also rolling in wealth, but had to make their fortunes, and earn their bread, and would be the better of the countenance and friendship of kindred more largely endowed with this world's goods.

My richer friends, in whatever rank, think less of yourselves and more of your neighbours, put yourselves in their place and be willing to let them cost you something which is not money. If you are free in independence and affluence to spare time for others, as many of us are not, to any great extent, because our energies are spent on the binding duty of providing for our own households, give without grudging to those who, a generation back, sprang from the same cradle as it were. Be perfectly candid with yourselves and your poor cousins, do not make a pretence of regard for them, and doing them service, while you are simply serving yourself, and consulting your own convenience. Do not invite old or young among your less prosperous kin when you are at the seaside, or in the country, unless indeed they particularly need the sea air, or are remarkably fond of the country. Do not attempt to persuade yourself or them that you have conferred a real favour on them, when you have, in fact, only entertained them on occasions because they helped to entertain yourselves, and were not in the way of your other arrangements. Do not oppress your kindred with gifts which are of no use to them, for which they do not care, just because these are superfluities you wish to get rid of. If you purpose to give them a gain or a pleasure, let it be a very genuine gain or a very real pleasure to them. Be tender of their feelings, even of what you consider their "silly pride," be careful not to wound them. Bestow your benefits so as not to crush and shame the persons benefited, and you will never greatly regret it, even though they are exacting and ungrateful. On the other hand you may find that they will rally round you, and stand by you in sickness and sorrow when those you have looked up to, in the light of friends to be desired for their influence, or their fashion, or their so-called refinement, fail you. You may live to realise that, having cast your bread upon the waters, you have found it after many days, and that "blood is thicker than water."

BETWEEN SCHOOL AND MARRIAGE.

THE vast importance of this stage of life is surely greatly under-estimated.

School life has its rules, its order of work; pressure is brought to bear upon the possibility of attaining the highest place, and securing the mark of distinction. All branches of study have been hastily gathered under notice. Ideas, thoughts and opinions of others have been culled, until a sense of power comes from knowing something of the problems by which we are surrounded.

The scaffold of theoretic education is complete, and the maiden steps forth—either to erect thereon a structure that shall stand the wear of years, or to leave unfinished what "might have been," and let the gathered material crumble into hopeless ruin.

But no law is prescribed, whereby to regulate this most momentous stage of woman's life. Is this the reason why she drifts into an easy indifferentism and takes the pleasure and the fashion, the light domestic duty, or the outside claim, just as fancy will?

Before her lies the probable prospect of a home to call her own, over which she will reign as queen, the very tone of which shall be according to the harmony or discord she creates, and yet to hundreds this seems nothing, as they gratify each passing wish for fashion or for pleasure, and regard domestic duty as a restraint; something to be ashamed of, and carelessly gone through, while the novel or the party fills the near horizon.

For all the misery of badly managed households—for much of the struggle to "make ends meet"—for the unhappy, ill-trained children in the nurseries, and the haunting grief of debts, there is a cause, the source of which lies *between the school and marriage;* and were that period used in common sense preparation, such troubles need not be known.

Young woman, whoever you are, stepping forth now from days of exclusive study, let your theory be a step to noble practice. Let no accident of changing circumstances ever overtake you unprepared. If you have now all you need, be ready for the very reverse, in case it should come to pass.

You may have servants in that anticipated "castle" that is to be yours some day! But they need teaching, and will be what their teachers make them.

You may have a husband who is fond of music, and of reading; but you must know how to read and play and sing creditably if he is ever to appreciate the charm of the songs you sing, or enjoy the poetry in the books you read to him.

Your dignity will not lie in tasteful dress, or in justly complaining that things are not done, but in understanding every detail of your home, and knowing how and when its duties should be performed. True, to a large extent, we have to learn by experience, yet forewarned should always mean forearmed, and they who go in full armour to the battle stand the best chance of success.

There should be no waste or idle time, when freedom comes from school law, and the wisest girl, and the one who most deserves the name of lady, will see to it that there is not a service necessary to the comfort of home, but can be accomplished by her own hands, if needs be, however fair they be, so that she may have the power to rule that only comes from knowing how to serve. As you have opportunity to see some you think in good circumstances you wonder why they are so worried, and their homes so wanting in order; how it is they cannot manage better, and be freer from house cares, when their past life was happy—and even now they are kind and good.

Be sure the missing link, that should have kept the chain of years all bright, was in the space between *school and marriage.* They did not make it a storing time of learning homely duties—becoming acquainted with the right plan of house-keeping—of cultivating unselfishness and forbearance by doing some work of love for others, when other tasks were over, and of carefully developing a cheerful and bright disposition, so that when the claim was made upon patience and tact, they would be ready with rich resources.

Be wise to use this golden stage of maidenhood, for God only knows how much the history of nations is what the women make it in their homes, and they must be well equipped who would avoid the mistakes and discomfort into which too many less careful ones have fallen.

Let the bright and cultured girl, fresh home from school, remember she has just begun a new side of her education, and at once mark out a course of study that shall take in the practical side of life, and master for herself the duties she will demand of others, that with ease she may be able to point out the right way, even if uncalled to execute the work hereafter. These essential, if not attractive lessons, should persistently be learned, and without delay; for other claims must have her thought; reading should be regularly carried on, such as will elevate the mind, and inspire to higher purposes.

Recreation for the body in constant exercise is needful, to prevent a morbid and weakly state of being in days to come. And if endowed with a heart to feel for less privileged ones, and a desire to serve One who has given all for her, she will take some part (if only small) in Christian service too.

Surely this period then, between school life and married life, cannot be thought of too seriously, since it holds the key that shall unlock the door of future happiness—or misery—for homes and society. While the ignorant and giddy girls sneer and scorn, let our refined and well-taught maidens be equal to their high responsibilities, and be up and doing, that in nothing they shall be lacking when opportunity offers, and they shall reap a grand reward in the harvest that must follow the stage of sowing now.

"Onward ever you should press
Through the path of duty;
Virtue is true happiness,
Excellence, true beauty.
Minds are of celestial birth;
You can make a heaven of earth."

S. HARVEY JELLIE.

"Recreation for the body is needful." *p. 72.*

OUR GIRLS AND THEIR TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

BY ARTHUR MONTEFIORE.

FOR a long time there has been a pretty general feeling throughout the country that the education of the children has been too exclusively intellectual; that too much notice has been taken of the mind and too little of the body; that while the brain has sometimes suffered from over-pressure the body has often suffered from neglect. It has at last been granted by public opinion—and we have to wait for public opinion before we can get on at all in anything like general reform—that the body must be trained as well as the mind; that the hand and eye will pay for education quite as fully as the brain.

But public opinion veered round to this belief in rather a selfish way. For it was no conception of what was educationally right, no adherence to the truth that the body and mind are mutually dependent, and that the condition and development of the one closely affect and react on the condition and development of the other; no realisation of the duty to train and educate (*i.e.*, "bring out") the powers of that body for which we have been taught by the highest Teacher to have a care. No, it was simply the fact that our commercial supremacy was in jeopardy; that the technically trained Germans, French, Austrians and Dutch were beginning to supplant us in that industrial production for the world's needs which we have been accustomed to regard as our birthright; that our consuls abroad wrote home to say that our workers and employers were blind to the necessities of the time, and that we were being ousted from the markets; that our merchants at home complained of the ignorance of our young men, and declared that they could get a better article (of German nationality) at a cheaper price; and, finally, that the whole country complained of the useless education—useless unless accompanied or supplemented by something more—given in the elementary schools; of the inability of the girls to perform their domestic duties, to which the great majority of them would look to as their work in life; of the wretchedness and ill-health caused in the humbler homes of the country by the ignorance of cooking—of cooking with wholesomeness, and of cooking with economy.

Such was the state of things till quite recently. It is to the Technical Instruction Acts of 1889 and 1891 that we must look for the change in our condition; all over the country a new influence is working, working steadily, working practically, and, therefore, we may hope and believe, working successfully. The County Councils of this country have some £800,000 per annum which they may devote, and which in nearly every instance they are devoting, to technical instruction—to teaching the scientific principles which underlie and are the very base and foundation of so many industries; to teaching arts, like drawing, which can be applied, and must be applied to a large number of trades and callings; to teaching the actual work of various vocations, as in the case of cooking. What is being done now is so varied in kind, and so great in extent, that it is impossible to give even any full idea within the limits of a short paper like this; but I want just to point out here in what direction the young women and the girls of the country are being benefited by the expenditure of so large a sum derived, year by year, from the payments of the taxpayers. In fact, I intend, in this paper, to give a short account of what the County Councils are actually doing, or intending to do for our girls.

In the first place it may be said that in nearly every county facilities are being given for the instruction of girls in such subjects as drawing and designing (especially for lace making and for textile fabrics); in simple hygiene or the laws of health and disease; in book-keeping and correspondence. These subjects are such as to be common to all occupations, and may be rightly regarded as forming the elementary stage of a technical education. But the subjects taught are by no means uniform; they are chosen in strict accordance with local requirements. This is the only rational method, a method which could hardly be employed under any system other than that of local government.

Of the more important subjects now being taught at ridiculously small charges, or without any charge at all, are cookery and dairy work. These two subjects are of first rank in point of their very general usefulness. Cookery, of course, appeals with force to everyone alike, whether she dwell in town or country; but dairy work (butter and cheesemaking, and the care of the dairy generally) has very strong claims on those who live and labour in the provinces of an agricultural country like England. I will take cookery first and point out what is being done; my cases can only be examples, and I will take them from representative counties.

In Oxfordshire, which is a typical agricultural county, the County Council has sent out a number of travelling teachers, competent not only to teach actual cookery, but also to give instruction in domestic economy. On condition that each locality will help itself to the extent of providing a room and students, the Council sends a teacher once a week for either six or twelve consecutive weeks. For more than 100 villages and towns such conditions have been accepted, and this instruction in cookery may therefore be considered general over the county. In addition to this, a class is held at a central town for the purpose of training women who are desirous of becoming teachers. Turning to another county, that of Surrey, I find that the same system of travelling or itinerant teaching is being pursued, and that in most cases courses of laundry work and nursing follow in the wake of the cookery course. In Hampshire, cookery is said to be more popular than any other subject, and about thirty teachers are at work in different districts. In Oxfordshire and Surrey the teachers travel to and give in each centre one lesson a week; but in Hampshire, the rule is to give the course of twelve lessons right off, and then move on to the next village. In Derbyshire (the population of which is largely industrial), much the same plan is followed, namely, the twelve lessons are give consecutively, and then the teacher moves on. The popularity of these cookery lessons has been great so far. Experience has shown that Mr. Buckmaster's prophecy has not as yet been confirmed. Mr. Buckmaster is a technical educationist, whose claims to a hearing we all must respect; and he said that "if the County Councils in rural districts think they can teach cookery to the wives of agricultural labourers from a cooking

van, their experience of these women in all matters of domestic economy is very different from mine." As a matter of fact, so far as the experience of the Councils goes, not only cookery, but also dairy work, has been successfully taught in this way.

It should be remembered that the kind of cookery taught is perfectly simple. It is the plainest of plain cooking. The stove used is just one of those simple, small stoves one finds in nineteen out of twenty cottages, and the food cooked is of that character and quality which cottage folk would buy. It is true that in one county an absurdity has been attempted; in the county of Devon the teachers have been showing how it is possible and easy to provide a dinner of six courses for six persons at 6d. each, the courses being white soup, lobster cutlets, curried eggs, stewed beef (garnished), cauliflower *au gratin*, and meringue pudding! Happily, however, wiser counsels have prevailed elsewhere—and in Devon, I believe, they have repented of the evil—and the cookery classes may be regarded as strictly confined to cottage cooking. There can be little doubt that the comfort, attractiveness, and wholesomeness of the home life of the wage-earner will be immeasureably increased by this wholesale study of cookery on the part of women and girls.

With regard to the dairy classes, these also are itinerant; that is to say, the teachers pass from village to village, with a portable shed and all the paraphernalia of the dairy. They principally teach the making of butter; indeed, in Oxfordshire, the school is called "The Butter School." But the making of "soft cheeses" is also taught in this county as well as elsewhere; of course, the time required for the making of hard cheeses renders it impossible for this subject to be taken by a travelling school. In most counties the school is held in each district for about ten days or a fortnight. The number attending the lessons has risen in some parts of Hampshire to as many as 170 and 180; and in Derbyshire nearly 1,000 people have paid to witness the butter-making, while as regards actual working pupils the schools are still inadequate to the demand. From this county comes very gratifying news: the pupils of the dairy school have carried off all the prizes in the open competition at the Derbyshire Agricultural Show. Of course, both boys and girls, men and women, attend these classes; but, as far as I can learn, the proportion of females is about equal to that of males.

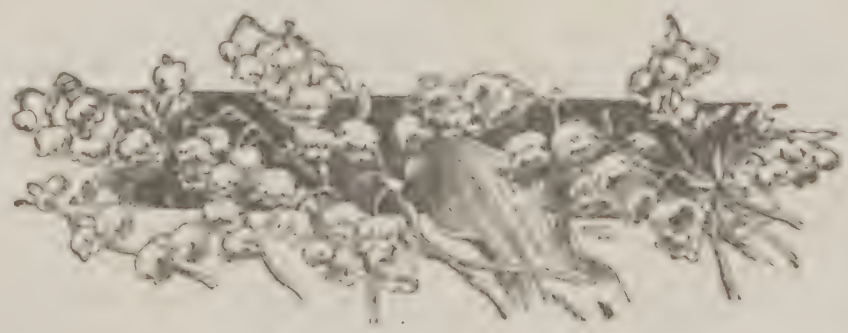
In various districts, as I said above, local requirements are held to take precedence of the general needs. For example, in Bedfordshire there is a considerable straw trade, and as a consequence design, colour, and dyeing are taught with special reference to this trade. But laundry-work, cutting-out and needlework, and practical domestic economy are the more important subjects after cookery. Dairy work I have described with cookery, chiefly to show what is being done in the villages for the amelioration of the lot of our agricultural population.

One word more: the Councils are founding numerous "scholarships," enabling bright boys and girls to pass from the elementary schools to some technical school or institute in the neighbourhood, and thus secure a free technical education of good character. Education, consequently, is not only being brought to the doors of the cottages by peripatetic teaching, but opportunities are being created for the solid foundation and the steady continuance of such education by a regular school course. And this, I think, is a great feature in this "technical" or industrial education; for in the case of all serious industries it is necessary. Such a system of "continuation or secondary" schools cannot but have a great and far-reaching effect on the capacity of our industrial classes and on the out-put of the country.

We all know the old rhyme—

> "He could not sow nor reap,
> He was not wise at all;
> For though full many arts he knew,
> He badly knew them all."

But if only the rules and art of good wholesome cookery be well-known by the women and girls of this country, we may venture to predict for it more happiness, more prosperity, more health.



CURIOUS ORIGIN OF SOME FAMOUS FASHIONS.

It is a remarkable but perfectly well-known fact, that many fashions originated in the endeavour to conceal some deformity of the inventor. A reigning beauty in the world of fashion chanced to have an unequal hip, and the invention of a hoop petticoat—or "farthingale," as it was anciently called—was the result. In the reign of Edward VI., a foreign lady who was a great personage about court, was disfigured by a wen on her neck, and the result was the invention of "patches," which have at times re-appeared after long intervals, in the history of fashions. A Dauphin of France had an excrescence on one shoulder, and his barber, one Duviller, invented the full-bottomed wig, which concealed the deformity of the prince, and of course became very fashionable, by reason of the royal patronage. Charles VII. of France had such ill-shaped legs that they were the common theme of jest among his courtiers. His tailor came to his rescue, and long skirted coats became at once the reigning fashion. Plantagenet, Duke of Anjou, had a large excrescence on one of his feet, and this was really the origin of those long-pointed shoes, two feet in length, which were worn for a decade, and which afford infinite amusement to the modern student of bygone fashions. Owing to a wound in the head, Francis I. of France was obliged to wear his hair short, and short hair at once became the fashion among the male portion of French society. Isabella of Bavaria, whose skin was of remarkable fairness, was not by any means averse to displaying her charms, and from her example, the fashion of leaving the shoulders and part of the neck uncovered, by court beauties, had its origin.

T.

AN UNEXPECTED BLESSING.

BY JENNIE PERRETT.

"I AM so glad you have come, so very glad. I wanted to send for you but it seemed unkind to do so when you called so recently, and I know how fully your time is occupied. But sit down, please; now you are here you can spare me a few minutes, can you not?"

"Of course I can," replied Mrs. Campbell, the hard-working wife of a hard-working vicar, as she seated herself near the couch, upon which, propped up by pillows, her friend Mrs. Sutherland was resting.

"What is the matter?" she added, as she looked at the pretty, flushed face. "Which wheel in the machinery has gone wrong to-day? Has the new housemaid proved incompetent, or has your good cook decided to be married this spring?"

"No, my new housemaid seems to know her work well, and my cook I am glad to say is not going to be married for a year at least. It is nothing here that is troubling me. I have had a letter to-day, one requiring an immediate answer, and it bothers me a good deal."

"No bad news I hope?"

"Yes, I am sorry to say. My brother-in-law's two little boys, Harold and Frank, are ill with fever; and Hetty, his wife, has written to ask if she may send their little girl Elsie here to-morrow. Now you know I really cannot do with a child here in my present state of health, can I?"

"Are you quite sure you cannot?"

"Of course I am," was the somewhat pettish reply; "it is very thoughtless, very inconsiderate of Hetty to suggest such a thing, but then she has not seen me since my illness, she does not know how weak I am, how wholly unfitted to have the charge of a little child."

"How old is this little Elsie?"

"Seven, the two boys are five and four years of age."

"A little girl of seven, the eldest of the family, might not prove such a source of anxiety and trouble as her anxious auntie anticipates. Doubtless she can read a little, and then should the weather be fine you have a lovely garden in which she can play, and any time when she becomes too uproarious, you may feel yourself quite at liberty to send her over to the vicarage. A little noise more or less makes very little difference to us."

"Your children are not noisy."

"Are they not? Not when they call here with a message from me perhaps, but you should see them sometimes scampering round the garden, or playing some merry game in the nursery. Their father tells them sometimes that he could easily imagine there were fourteen instead of four of them."

"And you don't mind?"

"No, dear, why should we? The exercise is good for them; of course, during certain hours of the day when we wish them to be quiet, they obey as readily as anyone could wish them to. But about this little Elsie, my motherly heart has gone out to her at once you see. If you really feel you cannot take her, will you allow me to do so? You could write to your poor, troubled sister-in-law and tell her I am a reliable, respectable sort of person, can have a good character, etc.——"

"Don't!" exclaimed Mrs. Sutherland, "oh! I cannot tell you how I feel when you talk like that. You who have so much to do at home and elsewhere, how could you be burdened with a stranger's child to care for?"

"The care would not be regarded as a burden, dear, but as a pleasure, as something done for the Master, a joy, a privilege; you remember we were talking about this subject a few days ago."

"Yes, and I remember how I lamented my weakness and my inability to help forward some of the good work you have in hand—your 'Mothers' Meeting, 'Band of Hope,' 'Sick Club,' etc.—"

"Yes," said the vicar's wife, as her friend paused.

"I will take Elsie," exclaimed Mrs. Sutherland. "I will write at once and tell Hetty to send her to-morrow. How surprised Fred will be to find his little niece here when he returns."

"You expect Mr. Sutherland soon?"

"In about a fortnight. He expected to be away quite a month when he left home; he had a great deal of business to attend to in Belgium and Germany. Must you really go now? Well, many thanks for calling, and for the good you have done."

The next day, having travelled under the care of a lady who lived near her home, little Elsie arrived at her aunt's. A fair, gentle little maiden, somewhat shy and timid at first, but growing more friendly and confidential by and by, as she began to feel more at home with the lady whom she mentally designated her "pretty auntie."

Mrs. Sutherland found her busily engaged in looking at a picture-book when she came downstairs the morning after her arrival. Quickly the child ran forward to welcome her, and kissed her lovingly.

"I am so glad you have come," she said. "Cook and Mary were very kind, they gave me lovely bread and milk, and some toast for my breakfast, and Mary says she is quite used to children, because she used to live where there were five; but mother told me I was to be sure not to hinder the servants, and I was to give as little trouble as possible, so I didn't like to talk long to Mary, and I felt just a little bit lonely when she went away to dust the drawing-room. But now you have come it won't seem lonely any more. Are you going to lie down on the couch, auntie? Don't you get very tired of lying there?"

"Very tired, darling," said Mrs. Sutherland, kissing the

bright little face. "I really think I might venture to go round the garden with you this morning, it seems so fine and warm. Run and get your hat, dear, and Mary shall bring me some wraps."

This walk proved the first of many taken with her little niece. The child's bright presence did more than any doctor had been able to do. Weak from a severe illness, Mrs. Sutherland had yielded to feelings of languor and nervousness, and had made little or no effort to exert herself in any way. She had no children, and her husband's business necessitated his being away a great deal from home. All that money could purchase he was anxious to obtain for his fair young wife; but it never seemed to occur to him that her thoughts needed diverting from herself. So she had been left to think about herself and her ailments, left as many women in her position, beyond the need of work, are left, too much alone. No one asked or required anything from her until her little niece came. She, delighted beyond measure with her "pretty auntie," as she called her, sought and found a true friend in her. Together they rambled round the garden, or sat in one of the pleasant rooms, busy with books or dolls. A wonderful genius in the art of dressing dolls the "pretty auntie" proved to be.

Great was Mr. Sutherland's delight at the improvement he found in his wife's health when he returned home.

"Thank God, she has taken the first step towards permanent recovery," he said to the vicar's wife the day after his return.

"Yes," assented that good woman. "You have reason, I believe, to thank God for the unconscious ministry of a little child."

"I am so glad you have come." *p. 76.*

MARTYRS TO ETIQUETTE.

NOWHERE else probably were the rules of etiquette ever so rigidly enforced, or carried to such absurd extremes as at the court of Spain during the early part of the seventeenth century. Some amusing instances of semi-martyrdom endured by Royalties under this régime were recorded some forty years ago in an entertaining *brochure* from the pen of old Baron Bielfeld.

Philip III., seated one day at his fireside, was being scorched by the inordinate heat of the charcoal fire, and in his agony could devise no means of escape without violating the rules of court propriety. He could not rise from his seat without assistance, for that would break the law of etiquette; for the same reason no servant might enter the room unless summoned to do so, and the king under the circumstances being quite alone could not summon them. At length a marquis who had the privilege of entering, appeared, and the king commanded him to put out the fire, but this not being his function, he could not so far fly in the face of etiquette, but ran off for the proper official, leaving in the meantime his royal master to be further scorched.

A Spanish princess was once saved from death by burning, by the courage of a soldier

who rushed into the blazing apartment, and carried the princess away in his arms. For this breach of etiquette in daring to touch a royal personage, he was by the rules of the court solemnly tried and condemned to death, but ultimately in consideration of what the French would call the "extenuating circumstances" of the case, he was granted a free pardon!

A Spanish noble of the same period was relating to a friend his horror at just having seen a poor fellow drown in the river a few yards from shore. The noble being an expert swimmer was asked, "Did you not try to save him?" and he replied, "Try to save him? Certainly not. How could I have taken such a liberty? I had never been introduced, and did not even know his name." T.

THE CHILDREN'S PERIL.

A Dream Picture.

BY ALBERT E. HOOPER.

T was Sunday morning. A solemn Sabbath hush filled the street; and the pavements, which would soon be echoing with the footsteps of the returning churchgoers, were bare and deserted. I sat in the sunshine at the open window, with my book lying unheeded on the table before me; the weakness which kept me within doors would not allow me to read; and my thoughts, escaping control, wandered upon that hazy, undefined borderland of the imagination which, for want of a better name, we call reverie. As in robust health, our reasoning faculties are at their best, in our times of weakness, when the mind refuses to follow any consecutive train of thought, the shining wings of fancy begin to unfold. On this particular Sunday morning of which I am writing, I was just in that state of body and mind which has the strange power of bringing dreamland about us in our waking hours. But the scene before me had little in it to assist the imagination. The row of tiny, red brick cottages on the opposite side of the street, the hot, bare pavements, and the dusty road were all dull, stale and commonplace.

But stay! what was that?

Only the opening of one of the cottage doors. No, not only that, for there, standing in the street was a child —I almost said a child angel, such was the beauty and the simple purity of her face. She was poorly enough clad, but that fair skin and fluffy golden hair, shining like floss-silk in the sunlight, and those clear blue eyes might have belonged to the most delicately nurtured lady's child in the land.

In her hand the little girl held a big white jug; and as I watched her, other doors opened, and from each there issued a child, all bearing either jugs or bottles, or shining tin cans in their hands.

The time was drawing near when the public-houses would open; and my little girl—the child so beautiful that I almost called her an angel—and her little neighbours, all beautiful with the innocence of childhood, were starting in company—whither—for what?

TO THE PUBLIC-HOUSES! TO FETCH THE DINNER BEER!

Yes; let the printer use his biggest capitals that there may be no mistake about it. The thing is common enough, and we all know it. But do we often think what it means?

The sky remained blue and cloudless, but as the last echo of the children's feet died away, it seemed that a shadow had fallen upon the bright Sabbath morning. I closed my eyes, but although I did not sleep, all power of thought seemed to forsake me, and instantly I was borne away on the wings of imagination to a place I had never before seen, and a scene unfolded before my gaze such I am never likely to forget.

I have called it A Dream Picture.

A barren plain, black as soot, and covered by a sky so hot and lurid that it looked like a dome of brass. Not a shrub or a blade of grass was anywhere visible; no single trace of vegetation was to be seen; all was parched and foul; hot cinders and slag lay beneath my feet, a fine black dust filling the air almost choked me; and wherever I looked, in the place where trees ought to have been, I saw giant chimneys pouring out torrents of smoke, and where peaceful homesteads should have stood, I saw huge factories from the open doors of which came the continual crash and jar of machinery.

Painfully I drew near to one of these open doors, and gazing at the scene within, I almost shrieked aloud in my horror. Imagine, if you can, a vast work-room full of machinery—machinery not working smoothly under wise guidance, but machinery run wild!—machinery going at full speed, and left to its own devices, because those who should have held it in check were either asleep, mad, intoxicated, or had deserted their posts. Imagine the roar of the furnaces, the hiss of the imprisoned steam in the over-pressed boilers, the jar of the flashing pistons, the sickening shock of unregulated steam-hammers, the gun-like reports of snapping wheel straps—imagine this pandemonium, I say, and the imminent catastrophe, and then, further, imagine in the midst of it all countless children at play, tiny toddlers just learning to do without a mother's hand; healthy boys and young girls, innocent and fair, all unconscious of their danger.

This is what I saw, and it was too horrible to be borne. I struggled into healthy consciousness with an effort such as we use to throw off the crushing weight of a nightmare. My dream-picture vanished like a swift-furled scroll; I opened my eyes, and again looked out of my window on the sunny street. Yes, and there in the distance came my little angel-faced child, and, pausing just out of sight of home, I saw her lift the big, white jug with both hands to her lips that she might taste the dinner beer.

I have drawn two pictures—one from life and the other from imagination. The picture from life everybody has seen, either with sorrow or thoughtlessness; but the picture from imagination is no less true.

Fathers, mothers, if you were asked would you send your children into the midst of such uncontrolled powers of death as I have described, you would turn from the question with shuddering horror and indignation. And yet you do a thing which far more endangers them, every day, and with utter carelessness.

Think of it. These are no wild words, but words of soberness and truth. Every man and woman who reads these lines knows full well that in sending children to a public-house they are sending them into the company of those who, through the curse of drink, have lost control of powers far more deadly than any of the forces of machinery —powers of evil which can sink the souls of men into the deepest hell. True, no unguided hammer strokes or bursting boilers endanger their littles ones in life or limb; but words fly thick around them which have power to rob them of the tender bloom of innocence; seeds are being sown within them that in after years may bear fruit to poison their very souls.

Much is done in these days to stay the opium traffic, which is ruining our brothers far away on the limits of the Empire; more is being done to teach the heathen a knowledge of the true God, and rightly. But let the children of our English homes be remembered. This can be done without leaving the other undone.

Think of it, you who love the children, and would have them grow up pure women and men, valiant for the right. Think of it fathers—think of it mothers. Do not poison the stream at its source.

"THAT TIRESOME CHILD!"

"Thou, like a little curious fly
That fusses through the air,
Dost pry and pry
With thy keen, inquisitive eye,
And with many questions, ever
Rippling like a restless river,
Puzzling many an older brain,
Dost hour by hour increase thy store
Of marvellous lore."

L'ENFANT TERRIBLE is a term which has become familiar to all of us, representing often, through personal and vexatious experience, an irrepressible "putter" of questions, inconvenient, unseasonable, unreasonable, insoluble, and unanswerable; an extraordinary instinct for hitting upon people's sore points and probing their weakness; a blissful ignorance of the fact that maiden aunts do not care to be questioned about their age, nor elder sisters about their lovers, nor bachelor uncles respecting the probabilities of their ever getting married.

Most large families possess such an irrepressible member, usually of the masculine gender, and he is one of the most difficult problems to solve in the household regime; none of the rules and modes of management which have proved so eminently successful with the others, seem to be appropriate to *l'enfant terrible.* Eager, earnest, intensely interested in everything and everybody, with the keenest sense of the humorous and all the audacity of youth, repression and snubbing are absolutely of no use. Kindness and wisdom urge the parents to one course, namely, to accept the situation and strive to turn the questioning qualities of the irrepressible into channels of future usefulness.

An inquisitive child need not necessarily be an offensive one, even though he may tax our patience at times; we must remember that a healthy, thoroughly intelligent child must be an inquisitive one. Few children, and those only dull, morbid ones, feel as Harriet Martineau did; she writes in her autobiography, "I seldom asked questions in those (early) days; I went for years together, in a puzzle, for want of it ever occurring to me to ask questions." The ordinary unquestioning child will never "set the Thames on fire," or make a great impression in the circle in which he moves.

Locke bids parents encourage, by patience and sympathetic attention, the questions of a child; "it is a natural instinct for gathering information prompts him to be always questioning." This instinct was strong in Blaise Pascal, who wanted to "know the reason of everything." The child was indeed father of the man. His elder sister and biographer, Madame Périer tells us, "when others spoke of good reasons, he tried to find others for himself, never quitting a subject until he found some explanation which satisfied himself." Lord Chesterfield repeatedly advises his son, upon whose education he expended much anxious thought and care, to "ask questions and many questions, and leave nothing until you are fully informed of it."

The questions of children test our own capacity; their queries concerning the most commonplace objects around us will show us how limited is our knowledge of their "how, why, and wherefore;" we shall feel ourselves in the position of the father of Felix in "Wilhelm Meister," who "was frequently asked such questions as, Whence came the wind? or, Whither went the flame?"

Mendelssohn describes himself in a letter from Interlaken as passing a day with his three children, who "asked a thousand wise questions which no fool could answer. People generally word this the reverse way," he adds, "but my rendering is the right one." It has been said that it is as impossible to stem the stream of children's questionings as to stop the flow of a mighty river, yet, alas! it is quite possible to divert the stream; to teach them, by our inattention, our incomplete or inaccurate answers, to take their questions elsewhere for solution. Let it be our endeavour to be all our children expect us to be in this particular—patient listeners and wise instructors. It will cost us time, effort, and self-suppression, but surely the result is worth all it may cost. The children will doubtless ask us many questions we cannot answer; but we shall soon acquire wisdom in answering. Do not be tempted, when they ask questions to which you cannot wisely give answer, "to make up" a reply, truthful perhaps, but incomplete and delusive, but say frankly that it would be unsuitable to explain; when they ask questions concerning the objects around them, do not be afraid to say you do not know more than they do, but you will find out, and with them search dictionary, map, or scientific handbook for the desired information. "Such matters take time," you say, "and one has so many other duties." That is very true; in life some things always get crowded out. But acknowledge to yourself gravely this fact, questioning children *will* be answered, and if you will not help to satisfy them, they will go to those who may not bring to the task the wisdom and delicacy a parent would. That mother who voluntarily lets her child's mental training slip beyond her control will, sooner or later, have cause for regret.

ISABEL SUART ROBSON.

DRESS AND DRESSMAKING.

GORED and fan-shaped skirts, now in such general use, are mostly completed with a train at the back, of more or less length, which, despite its many objections, gives a very graceful and natural finish to skirts of these shapes. Long dress skirts of this shape have one great advantage, in the very convenient way in which the whole of the fulness may be caught up in the hand when necessary. For this reason it is desirable to have the skirt lining of the same colour as the outer material, otherwise a strip of such will have to be put on the left side of the skirt separately, as the lining will show when the train is taken up. Many skirts are worn quite plain, others have a ruching or narrow flounce or pleating of the same material, or silk, to match. Dress bodices form a great contrast to the plain skirt, for they are elaborately trimmed or draped in every description of corselet, yoke, or bertha. Great care needs to be taken with the shape and fit of a dress-body in the present style. Some of the best dressmakers cut and join the lining together first, and then drape the stuff over. This is done when the stuff is to be put on in a straight or sloping direction, as well as when it is to be set on fulled, gathered, pleated, or plain. Princess dresses and short bodices with waistbands are much worn; indeed, the long basque body is fast going into the shade again. Sleeves are not made so high on the shoulder, and are not so much puffed, the fulness being drawn down to the elbow, and there finished with a band of velvet, or ribbon bows, in accordance with the other trimming of the dress.

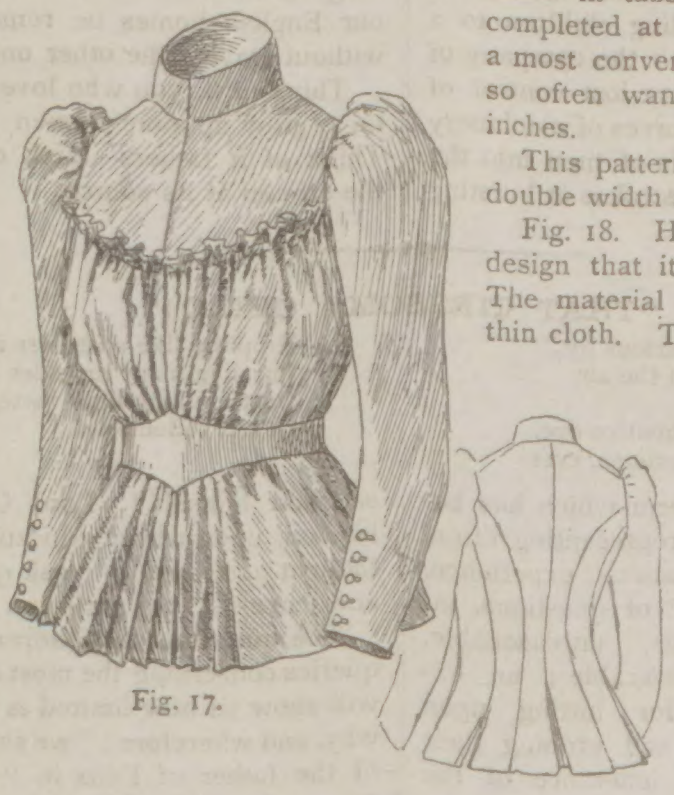


Fig. 17.

Fig. 17 shows a blouse bodice, such as are still in great favour. Many ladies who have a dress-skirt tolerably good, the body of which is quite worn out, will be glad to get a piece of stuff, and make a body of this kind.

Our pattern is made in diagonal serge, cherry colour, and is to be worn over a black skirt. The body is made over a fitting lining, and has a pointed yoke-piece in front, below which the stuff is gathered, and set on with a heading about half an inch wide. This fulness is laid in pleats at the waist, where the body is completed with a Swiss belt of the same material, which does not go all round the waist, but is let in at the side seam. The backs are plain, and the seams are left open below the waist, where they finish in tabs. Plain sleeves are used, which are completed at the wrist with a few buttons. This is a most convenient style of sleeve for a mother, who so often wants to turn up the dress sleeve a few inches.

Fig. 18.

This pattern will take two and a quarter yards of double width stuff

Fig. 18. Here we show a neat dress, so simple in design that it can be successfully made at home. The material employed may be serge, corduroy, or thin cloth. The body lining is made to fasten down the centres, while the material fastens on the cross. The backs are long, and finish similarly to the tails of a gentleman's dress coat. A gored skirt is used with this pattern, and is a few inches on the ground at the back, while a narrow pleating or a band of contrasting material goes round the entire skirt at the bottom.

The dress will take six yards of double-width stuff, four and a half yards of skirt lining, two yards for body and sleeves.

Fig. 19. This is a very nice pattern for a little girl from two to eight years of age. The skirt will need from two to two and a half widths of material. This is hemmed and tucked and set into a band of embroidery insertion. A strap of the same goes over the shoulder, and the neck and arm-holes are finished with embroidery edging.

Flat patterns can be supplied, Figs. 17, 18, 6½d. each; Fig. 19, 4½d.—Address, "M. C. Pattern," 9, Paternoster Row, E.C.

Fig. 19.